Alienating my Audience Before We Even Begin

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Shining boxcars spill from the train yard
to collect the inconvenient for incineration.

The first-class passengers ask the burning
to keep their screams down, for chrissakes.

Don't you know what time it is???
Can't you just behave??? How rude!

Someone sets fire to the railhouse
but the conductors only add to the score.

It's already too late. The engines overheat.
The iron tracks slouch and run like butter.

Structure fails, ash down to the filter.
Somewhere, an emperor rosins his bow.

No fawns shelter in a nest of leaves. No glib sunset
promises rain. Press this wasp-nest poultice

to your bleeding heart and hold it close
while we witness what remains:

No one is excused from the bloody struggle
toward kindness. Hope is entirely optional.

Lea C. Deschenes

Lea C. Deschenes lives, works, typesets stanzas, and generally hangs out in Worcester, MA. She has been writing and performing poetry for over thirty years. Her work has appeared online, on stage and in print, including the full-length collection *The Constant Velocity of Trains*. She also served as co-editor of the anthology *Knocking at the Door* and worked editorially and as a book designer with Damfino, Radius, Best Indie Lit New England, Write Bloody Press, and Trio House Press. She once found a five-leaf clover during a solar eclipse.